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TERRIBLE

Google Reviews
of beloved Minnesota landmarks

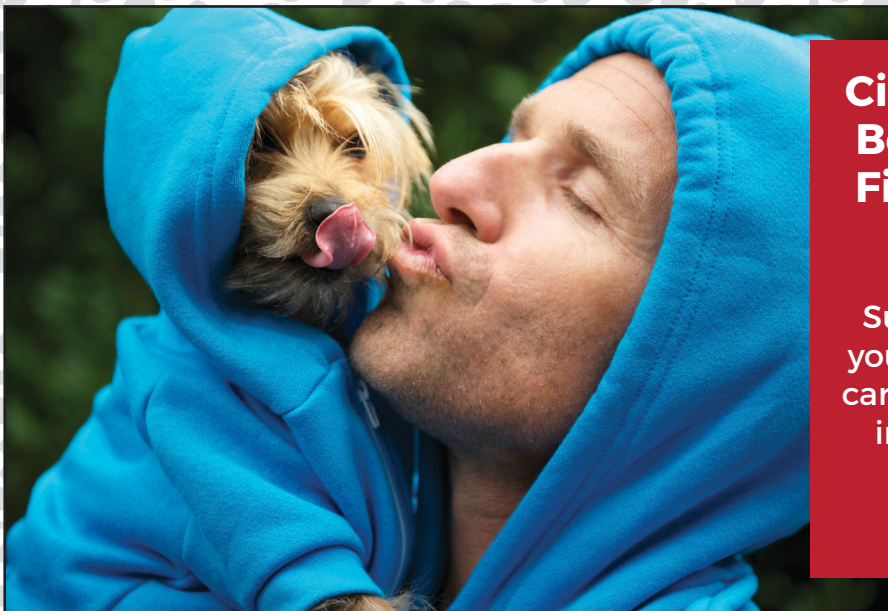
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OFFICE HOURS Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

ISSN 0744-0456. City Pages is published weekly by Star Tribune Media Company, LLC. City Pages is located at 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. City Pages is available free of charge, limited to one copy per reader. Additional copies of the current issue may be purchased at the City Pages office for \$1, payable in advance. No person may, without prior written permission of City Pages, take more than one copy of each City Pages weekly issue. Subscriptions are available for \$100 per year. Subscription orders must include check or money order payable to City Pages, and should be mailed to City Pages Subscriptions, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Postmaster: Send address changes to City Pages, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488.

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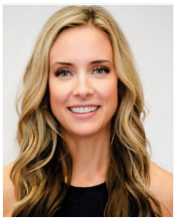
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THE SHORTLIST

Remembering
Muddy Waters,
Lyndale's beloved
coffee shop turned
bar-restaurant
at citypages.com



BRE MCGEE

THE STAT SHEET

5

Minneapolis chefs and restaurants named
James Beard award finalists

2,183

Latest federal estimate for COVID-19
deaths in Minnesota by August 4

380,000

Low-income Minnesotans who will
soon be able to buy groceries online
with food stamps

540

Homeless people with underlying health
problems who've been moved out of
shelters into area hotels

**"This country is so great that there's
a private garden anyone could buy for
\$4.25M, yet the young still have
a favorable opinion of socialism!"**

Reader Jesse Meyer responds to
"Wanna buy a \$4.25M private garden
in Medina?" at citypages.com

COSTCO CUTS

DON'T GO TO TWIN CITIES COSTCO locations expecting to stockpile a month's worth of meat: The Star Tribune reported this week that they're limiting purchases of regularly priced beef, pork, and poultry to three per member. The move comes as meat processing plants across the country shutter to combat COVID-19's spread, though Costco's the only local retailer implementing limits so far. And the good news is that the restrictions aren't a result of serious shortages—they're meant to proactively discourage the TP and hand sanitizer-type hoarding we saw in early and mid-March.

POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

SVEN SUNDGAARD fired
by KARE 11 for 'ethics violations'

Minnesota stay-at-home
order extended through
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EL BURRITO Minneapolis
permanently closes

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PAUL MOLITOR'S MANSION
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are a mystery. Can anyone get
to the bottom of it?



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SHOTS FIRED

Minneapolis Park Board member wakes up to gunshots, bullet-ridden cars

S ometime late Saturday night or early Sunday morning, Minneapolis Park Board Commissioner Kale Severson says, he heard 37 gunshots ring out as though they were right next to his head.

They weren't, but they weren't far. There was an incident underway outside his Irving Avenue home in north Minneapolis, as Severson wrote in a detailed account on his Facebook page on Sunday afternoon.

"My family was my first concern," he said. "So I ran downstairs to check on them as I knew they fell asleep watching TV."

They were startled and scared, but unharmed. Out the window, Severson said, he could see teens running around and hear them shouting about their "tool," followed immediately by sirens.

"I noticed the police collecting evidence, as in bullet casings," he said. "This

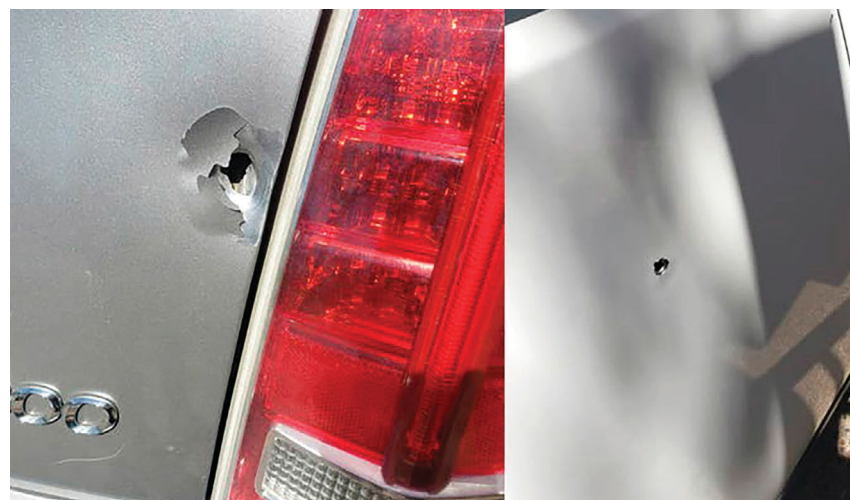
is a terrible ordeal for our community, more specifically Irving Avenue, as we have had multiple strings of violence in the past month."

He'd later go outside to find fresh bullet holes in his cars.

Irving Avenue has had its share of hardship in the recent past, including the loss of a 27-year-old man named Kevin Beasley, who was shot to death at a house party on the 1100 block in late April. His grandfather, veteran civil rights activist Spike Moss, called the trend of young black men being the victims of shootings the "epidemic before the [COVID-19] epidemic."

Days before that, two people were seriously injured and subsequently hospitalized after a shooting incident on the 3500 block.

Severson didn't respond to interview requests, but in his post, he said he was "pissed off" and "a bit lost."



KALE SEVERSON, FACEBOOK

"I'm upset that other parts of our city and county don't understand the violence, more specifically the gun violence in north Minneapolis," he wrote. "The one thought I have is as an elected park board commissioner I've been distracted by residents outside of north Minneapolis about road closures, pesticides, beavers, and so-called unfair bike practices. To hell with all of that."

He said he'd "continue his voyage" trying

to figure out how to reduce gun violence in the area—that it would be his "mission" for the remainder of his term.

"We deserve better!" he said.

One issue Severson referred to was the community debate about closing sections of Minneapolis parkways to give pedestrians more room to exercise and practice social distancing. Severson had concerns the parkways were overcrowded and would become a public health risk. —HANNAH JONES

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Split Rock Lighthouse
on Lake Superior

TERRIBLE GOOGLE REVIEWS

of beloved Minnesota landmarks

BY CITY PAGES STAFF

The internet is great for a lot of things. One of those things is voicing your loudest, rudest, most negative opinions about everything from airlines (thanks Twitter!) to your weird neighbor (thanks NextDoor!). And when it comes to bad reviews, no museum, cultural institution, restaurant, or body of water is safe.

Since we're unable to visit many of Minnesota's iconic attractions at the moment, we took to Google to see what their worst critics had to say. Did you think you missed taking a drive to Lake Superior? Going to shows at First Ave? Touring the SPAM Museum? Consider instead that maybe they're actually "trash," "gross," "disgusting," and "[poop emoji]" after all. *Some reviews have been condensed or edited*

for clarity. And hoo boy, did a lot of these critics ever need an editor.

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

Average Google Rating: 4.8

Free to the public, this stately but hip institution houses over 90,000 works of art. But some Googlers made peculiar demands of a museum, recoiling from the nudity the art depicted, chafing at Mia's refusal to, uh, "cater to non-gays," and demanding more singing toilets.

"The visit went well and the exhibits were great! But while I was there I stopped at the gift shop on the way out and noticed they're selling pins labeled 'Gay Forever.' I'm not gay and would expect that they would cater to non-gays also. Couldn't they also have pins labeled 'Straight Forever'? Why do only gays get credit anymore?"

"Quite a lot of nudity."
"Guess you have to really be into art to enjoy this place..."

"No art."
"Disappointed in flowers."
"Would be five stars but did not have singing toilets in the bathroom. THE RUMOR IS FALSE."

LAKE SUPERIOR

Average Google Rating: 4.7

The largest of the Great Lakes and a formidable presence on Twitter, Lake Superior is also either way too dry or much too wet and somehow too big or not big enough, depending on who you ask. (And you'll never guess what joke the rest of the critics make about it.)

"Lake Superior? More like Lake Mediocre. LAKE MICHIGAN GANG."

"Misleading name. More like Lake Mediocre. At best."

"Lake Superior??? More like Lake Mediocre."

"As you can see from the pictures, very dry for a 'lake.'"

"Meh, mostly water."
"Too much water, 7/10."
"Lake Inferior."
"Trash."

SPLIT ROCK LIGHTHOUSE

Average Google rating: 4.7 stars

A commanding testament to the power of Lake Superior, Split Rock has stood guard since 1910, protecting ships from the rocky North Shore cliffside. The dramatically perched piece of Minnesota history is one of our state's most photographed landmarks, though not everyone was happy to see it—particularly one indignant small-pet owner.



“Terrible customer experience. They wanted to kick me out for sitting under a tree with my guinea pig cage. Said I should have left it in the car. They charge you even if you just want to look around. For the time I spent on their parking lot the nice lady yelled at three other people.”

“Split Rock is not drone friendly.”

“It’s a light house that’s about 30 ft. tall. A very uninspiring landmark if you ask me.”

“\$10 to see a lighthouse.”

“Cool place, stubbed toe on rock, continued to punch rock, broke hand, stuck it in the lake to ice it, 10/10 would recommend.”

SPAM MUSEUM

Average Google Rating: 4.6

This gleaming cathedral honoring Minnesota’s contribution to American cuisine is a cheeky delight to most, the tongue-in-cheek Louvre for hyper-processed pork products. Somehow, not everyone appreciates the free Austin attraction. Valid critiques exist (Hormel’s historical treatment of its largely immigrant workforce; the indisputable horrors of industrial meat production), but these objections are... different.

“The staff followed me around the whole time so I just left.”

“Spam is gross.”

“Very disappointed. They claim to have samples. We kept asking about them and they’d say ‘they’re coming out soon.’ We were there well over an hour. I would have loved to taste some other flavors.”

“Well. We saw it.”

“Wanted to take the girlfriend, closed on Mondays. Pretty disappointed.”

“How much can you say about Spam?”

MICKEY’S DINER

Average Google Rating: 4.2

Prior to coronavirus and a statewide execu-

tive order, the only guarantee at Mickey’s was that the doors would be open. The unpredictability of a busy, divey diner staffed by sassy employees is, to some, part of its charm. To others (to many, based on reviews), the realization that Mickey’s was around before you were born and does not, in fact, need you to love it is a heartbreaker.

“The cook is very very rude and even told me we don’t need your business. He was giving the gentleman next to me a hard time and pumping his chest across the bar to him, and what looks like the manager... defended the cook. I got up and said I’m not giving you my business. I was so looking forward to eating here and taking a few pictures for my daughter because of *Jingle All the Way*.”

“Was excited to see/eat at this landmark. As soon as I walked in, it went downhill. Place is not really clean and staff is not hospitable. Did not even try the food.”

“Everything was going fine, food was good, service, eh, not so good. Then there was a dead fly in my grandson’s chocolate milk which my grandson was really bothered by. They offered a new chocolate milk but when the bill came, they charged us for both chocolate milks. How appalling.”

“I will never go back. Not sure why this has such high reviews. First of all, the guy spills the bean soup all over the person I was with. Then grabs the smallest napkins to try and clean it up. The food is so bland. Service subpar. Ate about half my food and just was done with that place.”

“Terrible experience. Waited over an hour for food so we got up and left. As we were leaving, the waiter yelled at us to ‘never come back.’ Definitely won’t be going back.”

“Extremely hot inside. Felt sorry for the people working there. Decided to leave before placing order because we did not want to be dehydrated before we left.”

“I understand what people like about



Mickey’s diner: bad service, trash food, disgusting environment. I just don’t like those things.”

PAISLEY PARK

Average Google Rating: 4.8

Prince’s home and creative compound in Chanhassen was opened to the public as a museum after his death. But not all of the public were open to what they encountered at Paisley Park. And apparently one person panned the place because Prince died there. Bad place!

“Nothing was the same. Prince’s clothes and shoes didn’t look like his. What are they doing to Prince’s home?”

“Dude, it’s 50 bucks just to get in. I’m down for a 20 any day, but 50 bucks... and you don’t even get to take pictures?! This is wrong. Also the place isn’t even paisley OR purple. Looks like an office space building. Such disappoint.”

“Brought my mom from California to visit security guard was really rude to us.... Don’t think Prince would have liked that.”

“I don’t hate this place. But, with the news that Prince died there today, that’s just heartbreaking.”

“Unpopular opinion: The experience was underwhelming and mundane. If you want to look around a corporate office type building with some stage costumes and awards hanging on the wall this tour is for you.”

MINNEAPOLIS SCULPTURE GARDEN

Average Google Rating: 4.6

Back in spring 2017 (roughly two lifetimes ago), just about everyone was ready to hate on the Sculpture Garden, which had just erected artist Sam Durant’s horribly ill-advised *Scaffold* piece. Before and since that scandal, the chance to encounter modern art in a spacious and green outdoor

setting seems, at worst, like a pleasurable way to get in a thought-provoking stroll. Not to these reviewers.

“A park with weird sculptures. Not impressed.”

“If you’re not into squashed naked women and other weird stuff or you are sober in general DO NOT GO it’s not going to make any sense.”

“The only positive was that it had a good view of the Minneapolis skyline. Most of the ‘art’ was modern art that has

“It’s a soul-sucking, deep-fried zoo.”

no meaning and looks like trash. One of the ‘art’ pieces was a bunch of scrap wood screwed together, which is a disgrace to all classical art. Another one was a bunch of scrap metal welded together. Again, ugly and has no meaning.”

“Not enough metallic phalluses for my taste.”

“Prime downtown real estate could’ve been put to better use than this overgrown garden of rummage sale items. Or maybe that’s the look these modern artists were going for.”

STILLWATER LIFT BRIDGE HISTORIC SITE

Average Google Rating: 4.4

Stillwater’s historic swing bridge hasn’t seen car traffic since it switched to the new St. Croix Crossing Bridge in 2017,



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Weisman Art Museum

but these spiteful reviews of time wasted
waiting to cross it will live on forever.

"It is a bridge on the St. Croix river. I have
no idea why everyone loves it so much.
Currently closed for construction."

"Takes forever to cross... thankfully
there's a new bridge."

"Hate this stupid bridge. Can't wait
for August."

"Hate summer time. You get stuck on
the bridge constantly. More of a hassle
than anything!"

FIRST AVENUE

Average Google Rating: 4.6

The iconic Minneapolis rock club, beloved
by Prince, local music fans, touring bands,
and basically everyone except a few people
on the internet who argued with bouncers
or forgot their IDs.

"The lady who's a manager was so mean."

"It's too loud."

"The venue is awesome but when I
checked something I didn't get it back
the way it was when I out it in there won't
be doing that again so it gets zero from
me but won't allow that."

"WILL NEVER RETURN."

"Went with my wife who had spent \$200
for 'front row tickets' according to what
she had purchased. Come to find out, there
are NO seats. It is a standing venue.... We
drove 200 miles for this show and spent
well over \$200 dollars as our ticket depicted
'FRONT ROW SEAT' FOR A MOSH PIT
AND A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE. We
will never come back. Beware."

"Bring your ID, regardless of age.
Learned the hard way that there were
no exceptions to this policy, even though
my wife was 45 years old, we had traveled
from out of state, spent money on a
hotel room, and spent \$50 on tickets to
see a show (non-refundable). Thanks for
ruining a weekend."

STONE ARCH BRIDGE

Average Google Rating: 4.8

The second-oldest bridge along the Mis-
sissippi river and the only one made from
arched stone, most people love walking
or biking here, admiring the rushing river
below and the crashing St. Anthony Falls.
To others: just a bridge.

"The dubious Minneapolis Park Board
closed the bridge to get funding for repairs
unnecessarily."

"Too cold!"

"It's a bridge! Nothing more."

"It's a bridge."

"It's just an old bridge."

"Overgrown area."

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

Average Google Rating: 4.7

Ah yes, perhaps the most beloved Min-
nesota institution of them all. Who would
even dare talk shit about the Great Min-
nesota Get Together? Google reviewers,
they would dare.

"Been going my whole life, but the crowds
have gotten absurd. It's about how much
money can we make. Great Minnesota Get
Together? More like Great Minnesotan
Infestation. Done."

"They removed Pokémon Go. Not worth
the drive anymore."

"We were told by multiple people to get
out of the way and how dare you bring a
wagon to the fair type attitude."

"Never going back again. How can I
give this place and the experience zero
stars? How about negative stars? I have
more fond memories of funerals than I
do of the Minnesota State Fair. I cannot
understand how so many people think that
surrounding themselves with armpits is
the highlight of the summer."

"Why does the State Fair have record



attendance every year and the prices keep going up on everything?”

“It’s a soul-sucking, deep-fried zoo. But the rest of my family loves it dearly.”

MARY TYLER MOORE STATUE

Average Google Rating: 4.5

When you go to Philadelphia, you gotta run up a whole fuckload of museum steps. When you hit New York, you have to wait in line for hours no matter what you do. But if you visit Minnesota, just get a photo of yourself throwing your hat in the air on Nicollet Mall and you’ve done your touristly duty. Still, there are a few Google reviewers who prove that love isn’t all around.

“Couldn’t find it. Was not where the map said it should be.”

“Creepy place... creepy people. MSP is... well... kinda creepy.”

“Why is this here?”

“It’s a statue. It’s cold and rainy.”

MINNEHAHA FALLS

Average Google Rating: 4.8

With its splendrous 53-foot waterfall and surrounding limestone bluffs, Minnehaha Park feels magically removed from the city, like you clicked your Tevas three times and were whisked away. Unless, of course, you find waterfalls “freaky” and someone gives you work to do while you’re there.

“Went here on a school field trip. The 14-page assignment that came with it ruined the whole place.”

“There was zero parking. I never got to even see the falls. I recommend not to go on the weekend.”

“This is very boring and should be burnt down, and no, I’m not an arsonist. All you can do is stand around and look at a freaky trickle of water falling through

the air! I would give this a rating of negative 1,000,000 stars.”

WEISMAN ART MUSEUM

Average Google Rating: 4.6

There’s an inevitable letdown here, right? The stunning, Frank Gehry-designed exterior of the Weisman is a gem known and admired by architecture fans the world over. Inside, the University of Minnesota’s museum focuses largely on modern or timely exhibits, and employs (gasp!) U students to staff the place, a feature not lost on some reviewers.

“The building itself is a work of art but there are not as many exhibits as there are in other museums.”

“I am not an art lover so it really didn’t hold my interest.”

“Laughable what some people call art! I would have been angry if it cost [money] to get in.”

“They were almost funny how they kept out us ruffians until the exact minute they opened. The collection was interesting. They had staff (student workers?) chatting about inane things while we were going through which was a bit distracting. Biggest disappointment was the huge billboard that shimmers with any air movement, but there’s no fan to do that. And there’s a sign not to blow on it, which I honestly didn’t see until after I did just that.”

“The building is beautiful and the art was nice. If I were that type of person I’m sure I would have loved it.”

BELL MUSEUM

Average Google Rating: 4.3

After fighting in the Legislature for well over a decade, and through two vetoes by Gov. Tim Pawlenty, the University of Minnesota finally got state backing of a \$64 million rebuild for its natural history

museum. Reopened in 2018, the Bell’s the sort of place local kids will grow up going to for field trips or afterschool programs. Adults, meanwhile, can content themselves with reliving their childhood while complaining online.

“The museum was boring and poorly labeled. The interactive exhibits didn’t work well and the rest of the exhibits are pretty to look at for a bit, but super stale. The staff was mostly unhelpful and standoffish. The location is horrible (in the middle of farm fields) and the parking was an expensive trap.”

“Not worth the price of admission at all. There are much better museums in Minnesota and across the world that deliver more solid science and fun while still costing less for admission. The dioramas were all stuffed animals that don’t move and the planetarium was quite boring. The planetarium presenter seemed to kind of hate his job and was rude to people asking questions.”

“Nice slick new building built with a lot of tax money, and then the \$12 adult admission charges are high. On top of that you’ll get charged \$5 just to park in the lot which has plenty of space. I don’t like being nickel and dimed, especially not by an institution like the U of M which has plenty of money already and still received millions in tax money to build this place. And the reason they needed to build this place? Well they just decided to demolish the old one to make room for something else on their Minneapolis campus, something they didn’t even need to do.”

“The planetarium was a letdown. The seats are positioned far too close to the front of the dome, making the whole top half of it unviewable unless you try to crank your neck backwards. The graphical presentation was very dated and in our viewing had several major visual glitches that they blamed on ‘Windows 10.’”

“They have a cool variety of nature and planets. But a lot of the things weren’t labeled so we had to question some of the animals.”

GREEN GIANT STATUE PARK

Average Google Rating: 4.5

Not everyone is so jolly about this big green guy!

“It’s OK but nothing great.

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“Horrible! \$1.75 for a CAN of soda. Average fries.”

“The Juky Lucy was tasty but I’m a Wisco gal and I like cheese and thought it would have been cheesier by the looks from the show Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives, but to each his own.”

“I don’t know. I never been to Matt’s Bar.”




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BY SARAH BRUMBLE

When we met Carla Mertz at the end of February, business was great.

The Iron Shoe Farm owner sold mangalitsa hogs, Hereford beef, Muscovy duck, cooperatively farmed local rabbit, edible flowers, and microgreens to 25 restaurants in the Twin Cities. Her clients included some of the metro's top, chef-driven destinations: Tilia, the Bungalow Club, Young Joni, the Woman's Club of Minneapolis, and Fhima's, to name a few. Iron Shoe also had two hogs bound for this year's Minneapolis stop of Cochon555, and was set to debut a new dinner on the farm series this month. The first three events had already sold out.

"Then COVID-19 hit and we immediately lost 90 percent of our business model. We were watching the news and they said restaurants are closed until, you know, that first date, and my stomach sank. And I had the thought process of 'I think I'm going to throw up.'"

"We really had to learn how to adapt and shift really quickly," she says now. "In a matter of, like, two hours the crap hit the fan."

With her restaurant clients on life support (if they were operational at all), Cochon555 postponed indefinitely, and those dinner on the farm events tentatively pushed until May, Mertz was staring at 100 hungry hogs that needed to go somewhere, and tens of thousands of dollars' worth of microgreens—the farm's tiny cash crop, which sell by the hundreds each week at summer's peak—spoilage quickly.

Contrasting dire reports of farmers across Minnesota smashing eggs, killing off livestock prematurely, and dumping produce due to lack of demand, Mertz kept a cool head.

"With microgreens, they're perishable; we can't just let them keep growing," she explained. "We could've given them to our chickens, but they're a food source, so instead I dropped them off at Hope Breakfast Bar... [and] to Justin Sutherland at Public Kitchen when they were doing their community open door pantry. We lost \$16,000 worth of that product category alone."

Beyond the shock of change itself, seeing such large figures go *poof* is scary no matter the industry. Mertz has just come up on the seven-year anniversary of purchasing the farm 50 miles north of Min-

BEST LAID PLANTS

Local farmers left reeling from restaurant shutdowns



COURTESY MEGAN DOBRATZ / NATIVE SUSTAINABILITY

neapolis, after a professional departure from 20 years in high-end luxury design. Those seemingly disparate professional worlds, the first-generation farmer says, both depend on human connection and a willingness to network.

With her spring plans devastated, Mertz hustled to set up an online store on Iron Shoe's website. Building this "pantry" involved securing a bevy of licenses from the state, all so she could act almost like a digital general store. Products range from flour, syrup, and cheeses, to proteins like rabbit, lamb, duck, and more—drawn

from a waiting list 50 Minnesota farms deep, each in a situation like her own. There's even a "Buy a Pack Give a Pack" option available in customizable sizes, that lets buyers take home half a CSA share's worth of consumables, while the other portion is sent to Sherburne County's CAER Food Shelf.

The quick pivot to online proved mutually beneficial. Mertz was able to recoup what would have otherwise been losses for Iron Shoe, including those Cochon hogs, while providing neighboring farms a platform to sell their products, too.

Mertz is quick to recognize how precarious people are feeling right now, especially related to food. "You see people posting about what's going on with some of the larger Smithfields and Cargills now closing, and it causes a sense of panic because it's like, 'These big places are closing, how are we going to get our food?'"

She says she issues the same advice as always to those folks: Buy local.

"I look at it as: If you're in Minnesota, do the best you can to buy products that are from our state. It's going to help so many people. There's wealth in neighborhood."


And if you're entirely lost, she says Minnesota Grown is a fantastic resource for those interested in buying from local farmers, but who may not know how to do it. For 2020, their online directory has 81 CSA members and 994 browseable listings, which makes buying local more approachable from a digital distance than ever before.

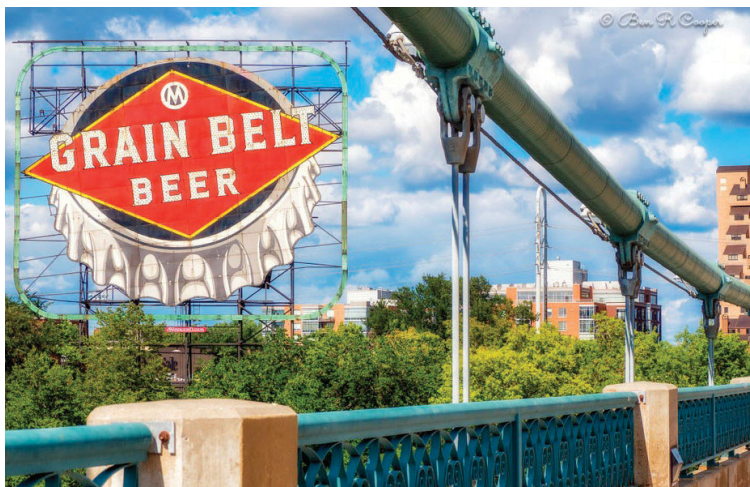
"A key tool Minnesota Grown has been able to offer in helping customers connect statewide is our map of farms/markets with products available direct to the customer, as well as a CSA-specific map with pickup location filter," said the org's member service coordinator, Karen Lanthier.

"These maps are able to be filtered by location, so people can narrow in on the farms/markets nearest them, and we've been sharing our 'What's In Season' guide so customers know when different types of fruits and vegetables will be becoming ready."

With the growing season ramping up, and many farms already at CSA capacity based on last year's sales, Lanthier told City Pages she's also seeing a turn toward smaller, local-based purchasing from consumers. "We've heard anecdotally from other producers—with items like eggs, meat, dried beans, grains/flour, and seeds—who are seeing greater than usual interest and sales this year compared to last year at this time."

As Iron Shoe's new online pantry comes into its own, connecting shoppers with precisely the products Lanthier mentioned, and the restaurant world reboots itself, Mertz is finding her legs in a new field—one that's even more interwoven with the farming community.

"I think [the store] gives other farmers hope that there's a module out there that they can learn from." 



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CITY PAGES



BY JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

Be they digital or tabletop, games can help you stretch the imagination, spark strategic inspiration, bring joy, and encourage human interaction. Here's what we're playing.

SHELBY LANO
Layout Editor

What are you playing?

Animal Crossing: New Horizons!

What type of game is it?

It's a social simulation.

What's the general premise?

Basically you're perpetually in debt... but like in a fun way? You're brought to an island where you build and expand your new home, landscape, decorate, pay off loans, and plot homes for neighbors who you'll do favors for. You can travel to other islands either to farm for resources or just to visit your IRL friends and see their virtual homes. Wholesome!!!!

What do you love about it?

Everything? I love that it's time-based and designed as a game you play at least a little every day. Or if you're an insatiable monster like me you can spend a good 14 hours at a time playing. I always have something to work toward and a reward to look forward to. It sounds dramatic to say that it gives me a sense of purpose and accomplishment during these trying times... but sometimes it really feels that way.

What do you get out of playing it?

I'm a visual person, so being able to decorate and customize so many aspects of my island is really fun. I always maintain that limitations allow limitless possibilities—being able to see how many different creative concepts people have for their one little island is inspiring in a way.

Would you recommend it?

Yes. 100%. Start playing, come visit me, and I'll hook you up with some resources.

JESSICA ARMBRUSTER
Arts Editor

What are you playing?

Assassin's Creed Syndicate.

What type of game is it?

It's an open-world video game with lots of quests, mini-games, and stuff to unlock.

What's the general premise?

Basically, you play twin assassins Jacob and Evie Frye, siblings trying to clean up the crime-ridden streets of Victorian-era

BORED GAMES

Our lockdown picks include retro, brand-new, and analog entertainment



GETTY

London by... making their own gang. Along the way you meet people like Alexander Graham Bell, Florence Nightingale, Charles Dickens, Karl Marx, and Queen Victoria. There's also a bonus game where you join forces with Winston Churchill during World War I.

What do you love about it?

Open-world games are fun because you can play however you want to in that moment. Do you feel like racing carriages for money? How about joining an underground fight club? Want to try to score big on a train heist? Go flower hunting in graveyards, raid a crooked pier, or stop by pubs in search of beers to add to your collection. You can do any combination of those things and be entertained.

What do you get out of playing it?

It's relaxing to explore late-1800s England, whether you're unlocking different outfits to wear, taking in the views from atop Big Ben, or freeing exploited child laborers. There are tons of little things to discover, like "Shaun's Tasting Notes," a collection of brew reviews. Here's his take on the Leaping Fox Lager: "A big, bold flavour of stomach acid finishes with notes of someone else's bubblegum and a smat-

tering of pencil shavings."

Would you recommend it?

Yes, it's super fun. My only caveat is that there doesn't seem to be a way to change the general gameplay difficulty, and the one setting is kinda on the easier side.

EMILY CASSEL
Editor-in-Chief

What are you playing?

Mario Kart 8.

What type of game is it?

It's the Nintendo go-kart racing game I've loved since the GameBoy era—now available on the Switch I panic-bought in March when outside life was canceled for the foreseeable future!

What's the general premise?

Go fast, avoid obstacles, throw junk at the competition, come in first.

What do you love about it?

Winning.

What do you get out of playing it?

There's a certain amount of escapism in it, also it's just a nice way to kill some time. I think looking back at my television pick (*Adventure Time*) and this, you can draw a lot of parallels in the media I'm consuming right now: cartoonish, colorful, fun, loud,

arguably made for children, something I already loved in the Before Time.

(That said, I also did just binge-watch all of *Waco*, so.)

Would you recommend it?

Yeah! Add me on Switch!

BRIDGETTE REINSMOEN
Copy Editor

What are you playing?

Cat-opoly.

What type of game is it?

It's a cat-themed Monopoly-knockoff board game purchased from an antique store—the type of pastime one might be pressed into by a cat-obsessed child who eats off a Garfield plate and insists on bedtime stories featuring felines every night “until we get a real cat.”

What's the general premise?

Cat-opoly is played exactly like Monopoly but with different vocabulary, so it retains all of the never-ending tedium and crass, soul-crushing capitalism of the original. But the kitty theme puts a bizarre twist on things. The properties players acquire are breeds of cats, houses are replaced with litter boxes, and hotels have become... fish skeletons(?). Why rent would be owed to the owner of a cat is never explained. Perhaps we're mini-Joe Exotics, charging fees to visit our feline menageries. But elsewhere it seems that the players *are* the cats; for example, instead of going to jail you might fall in water. Coherence was apparently not the goal here.

What do you love about it?

Well, it does at least also feature the best thing about Monopoly: the detailed little metal game pieces. Here they're a ball of yarn, a mouse, a sardine can, etc. Also, the property cards come with feline facts on the back. Here's one we learned: “The giraffe, camel, and cat are the only animals that walk by moving both their left feet, then both their right feet.” Hmm.

What do you get out of playing it?

I get a short reprieve from my kid bugging me about adopting a pet. For other people, I'm not sure, but possibly an ego boost? The company that made Cat-opoly, Late for the Sky, offers a personalized version of the board game. The website shows a bunch based on families, colleges, various fandoms, and, of course, brands.

Would you recommend it?

Nope. I'm gonna cave and get the kid a cat. 🐾



LOPSAN/PEXELS

ZEN AND THE ART OF CATALOGING YOUR RECORD COLLECTION

How using Discogs has made my time stuck at home more manageable

BY ERIK THOMPSON

Everyone is searching for a wholesome distraction during quarantine.

Doing puzzles, baking bread, recreating famous works of art—people are clearly in need of activities to distract them from the headlines and relieve the monotony and isolation that arise from staying at home.

For me, there's Discogs.

I've found joy and personal satisfaction in finally entering my record collection into the popular online music database. I've always wanted to know precisely how many albums I own (1,000+ and counting) and roughly how much they're worth. For insurance purposes alone, this is a worthwhile endeavor for any record collector. With all this extra time on my hands, this was the perfect opportunity to join the worldwide Discogs music community. And I'm clearly not alone in feeling this way—from March 6 through March 29, more than 34,000 albums were entered into Discogs, an increase of about 9,000 over the same time period last year.

How Discogs works is relatively simple.

Through their app, you scan barcodes, select which version of a record you own, and enter what condition the vinyl and sleeve are in.

For older albums without barcodes, it's a little more complicated. You can search by album and artist name, and match the listing with the catalog number for the record. If you want to dig deeper to get the exact pressing of your specific album, you enter the matrix number and any additional identifiers etched into the vinyl runout of the album and match that with the corresponding albums in the Discogs database.

But enough with the technicalities.

What's most rewarding is taking each record in my hands and thinking of where and when the album became a part of my life. I can recall the specific record shops where I purchased many of my LPs (RIP Atomic Records, Let It Be, Northern Lights, Oar Folkjokeopus, and Positively 4th Street). Each record conjures up memories of old friends I've gone record shopping with, cities I've lived in, or countries I've visited.

It's fascinating to think of the different people who owned the used albums in my collection before me and what jour-

neys those records took on their way to my shelves. Seeing names written on the backs of album sleeves makes me wonder who "David" and "Lucy" were, where they were when they bought these records, the stories of all the times they played the albums, and what circumstances led to the albums being sold. There's an untold history layered in the dust on these old records.

It's also pleasantly distracting when you get fully into the minutiae of entering each specific record. I enjoy getting lost within the tiny etched numbers on the vinyl runouts. I take pleasure in deciphering whether my copy of *Blood on the Tracks* was pressed in Terre Haute or Santa Maria, and what small differences distinguish them from each other. Cracking the intricate numerical codes on each record in order to figure out where they originated and what makes one version superior to another is intriguing to me as both a music lover and someone obsessed with order and reason.

The 15 minutes it takes to figure out if I have the Philips or Presswell Pressing of Warhol's zipper cover of *Sticky Fingers*

becomes a peaceful time when I'm blissfully lost in the task at hand, not horrified by the news or anxiously checking Twitter for the latest outrage.

The bands themselves occasionally reward those of us who pore over their records so closely by hiding secret phrases or in-jokes within the vinyl runouts. Radiohead is notorious for such hidden messages. On initial pressings of *OK Computer*, the phrases "I LIKE YOU, YOU ARE A WONDERFUL PERSON," "I'M FULL OF ENTHUSIASM I'M GOING PLACES," "I'LL BE HAPPY TO HELP YOU," and "I'M AN IMPORTANT PERSON, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO HOME WITH ME?" are etched into each of the album's four sides. These encouraging, convivial sentiments hidden in the dark slabs of vinyl stand in stark contrast to the lonely, isolated anxiety expressed by the album itself. Who says Radiohead don't have a sense of humor?

Local boys Hüsker Dü hid what sounds like the results of a bad trip onto early pressings of their landmark double album, *Zen Arcade*. Etched into the runouts of the four sides of vinyl is this ominous message: "FALLING, SHIRLEY - EVERYTIME I SQUARE OFF AGAINST SOMEONE'S GOD," "I SPEND THE REST OF THE NIGHT (OR DAY) HALLUCINATING," "AND NOW IT IS THE VISIONS OF A JOYOUS HELL..." "...WITHIN THE CIRCUITS THAT MAKE PAC-MEN DIE AND VESSELS DISINTEGRATE..."

For those of us willing to examine our records closely, there are the occasional hidden messages that casual listeners might simply miss. These etchings are just another creative piece of the artistic puzzle that the musicians have buried away in the inner recesses of the vinyl itself. Is it meaningless gibberish? Sure. But is it fun to discover when you've been staring at records all day? Most definitely.

Ultimately, the process of entering my record collection into Discogs has brought me closer to the albums themselves. This experience has helped me refine and recalibrate my love of music for the modern age. Handling each and every album in my library has caused me to reflect on the person I was when I bought the records, and the person I became since hearing them. Cataloging my albums has been a slow, sometimes labor-intensive process, but it has been a welcome distraction at a time when even a fleeting moment of peaceful tranquility should be treasured and celebrated. And you can't put a price or a catalog number on that. **LP**

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): According to Aries author and mythologist Joseph Campbell, “The quest for fire occurred not because anyone knew what the practical uses for fire would be, but because it was fascinating.” He was referring to our early human ancestors, and how they stumbled upon a valuable addition to their culture because they were curious about a powerful phenomenon, not because they knew it would ultimately be so valuable. I invite you to be guided by a similar principle in the coming weeks, Aries. Unforeseen benefits may emerge during your investigation into flows and bursts that captivate your imagination.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): “The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious,” says businessperson and entrepreneur John Sculley. You Tauruses aren’t renowned for such foresight. It’s more likely to belong to Aries and Sagittarius people. Your tribe is more likely to specialize in doing the good work that turns others’ bright visions into practical realities. But this Year of the Coronavirus could be an exception to the general rule. In the past three months as well as in the next six months, many of you Bulls have been and will continue to be catching glimpses of interesting possibilities before they become obvious. Give yourself credit for this knack. Be alert for what it reveals.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): For 148 uninterrupted years, American militias and the American army waged a series of wars against the native peoples who lived on the continent before Europeans came. There were more than 70 conflicts that lasted from 1776 until 1924. If there is any long-term struggle or strife that even mildly resembles that situation in your own personal life, our Global Healing Crisis is a favorable time to call a truce and cultivate peace. Start now! It’s a ripe and propitious time to end hostilities that have gone on too long.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): Novelist Marcel Proust was a sensitive, dreamy, emotional, self-protective, creative Cancerian. That may explain why he wasn’t a good soldier. During his service in the French army, he was ranked 73rd in a squad of 74. On the other hand, his majestically intricate seven-volume novel *In Search of Lost Time* is a masterpiece—one of the 20th century’s most influential literary works. In evaluating his success as a human being, should we emphasize his poor military performance and downplay his literary output? Of course not! Likewise, Cancerian, in the coming weeks I’d like to see you devote vigorous energy to appreciating what you do best and no energy at all to worrying about your inadequacies.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): “Fortune resists half-hearted prayers,” wrote the poet Ovid more than 2,000 years ago. I will add that Fortune also resists poorly formulated intentions, feeble vows, and sketchy plans—especially now, during an historical turning point when the world is undergoing massive transformations. Luckily, I don’t see those lapses being problems for you in the coming weeks, Leo. According to my analysis, you’re primed to be clear and precise. Your willpower should be working with lucid grace. You’ll have an enhanced ability to assess your assets and make smart plans for how to use them.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Last year the Baltimore Museum of Art announced it would acquire works exclusively from women artists in 2020. A male art critic complained, “That’s unfair to male artists.” Here’s my reply: Among major permanent art collections in the U.S. and Europe, the work of women makes up five percent of the total. So what the Baltimore Museum did is a righteous attempt to rectify the existing excess. It’s a just and fair way to address an unhealthy imbalance. In accordance with current omens and necessities, Virgo, I encourage you to perform a comparable correction in your personal sphere.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): In the course of my life, I’ve met many sharp thinkers with advanced degrees from fine universities—who are nonetheless stunted in their emotional intelligence. They may quote Shakespeare and discourse on quantum physics and explain the difference between the philosophies of Kant and Hegel, and yet have less skill in understanding the inner workings of human beings or in creating vibrant intimate relationships. Yet most of these folks are not extreme outliers. I’ve found that virtually all of us are smarter in our heads than we are in our hearts. The good news, Libra, is that our current Global Healing Crisis is an excellent time for you to play catch up. Do what poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti suggests: “Make your mind learn its way around the heart.”

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Aphorist Aaron Haspel writes, “The less you are contradicted, the stupider you become. The more powerful you become, the less you are contradicted.” Let’s discuss how this counsel might be useful to you in the coming weeks. First of all, I suspect you will be countered and challenged more than usual, which will offer you rich opportunities to become smarter. Secondly, I believe you will become more powerful as long as you don’t try to stop or discourage the influences that contradict you. In other words, you’ll grow your personal authority and influence to the degree that you welcome opinions and perspectives that are not identical to yours.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): “It’s always too early to quit,” wrote author Norman Vincent Peale. We should put his words into perspective, though. He preached “the power of positive thinking.” He was relentless in his insistence that we can and should transcend discouragement and disappointment. So we should consider the possibility that he was overly enthusiastic in his implication that we should NEVER give up. What do you think, Sagittarius? I’m guessing this will be an important question for you to consider in the coming weeks. It may be time to re-evaluate your previous thoughts on the matter and come up with a fresh perspective. For example, maybe it’s right to give up on one project if it enables you to persevere in another.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The 16th-century mystic nun Saint Teresa of Avila was renowned for being overcome with rapture during her spiritual devotions. At times she experienced such profound bliss through her union with God that she levitated off the ground. “Any real ecstasy is a sign you are moving in the right direction,” she wrote. I hope that you will be periodically moving in that direction yourself during the coming weeks, Capricorn. Although it may seem odd advice to receive during our Global Healing Crisis, I really believe you should make appointments with euphoria, delight, and enchantment.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Grammy-winning musician and composer Pharrell Williams has expertise in the creative process. “If someone asks me what inspires me,” he testifies, “I always say, ‘That which is missing.’” According to my understanding of the astrological omens, you would benefit from making that your motto in the coming weeks. Our Global Healing Crisis is a favorable time to discover what’s absent or empty or blank about your life, and then learn all you can from exploring it. I think you’ll be glad to be shown what you didn’t consciously realize was lost, omitted, or lacking.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): “I am doing my best to not become a museum of myself,” declares poet Natalie Diaz. I think she means that she wants to avoid defining herself entirely by her past. She is exploring tricks that will help her keep from relying so much on her old accomplishments that she neglects to keep growing. Her goal is to be free of her history, not to be weighed down and limited by it. These would be worthy goals for you to work on in the coming weeks, Pisces. What would your first step be?

CROSSWORD

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THE SUPREMES

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Org. that gives tips on pointers
- 5 “___ wires must be getting crossed”
- 8 Get crossed
- 13 Squawfish
- 14 Bring into play
- 15 “Ode to Billie Joe” singer Gentry
- 16 Religious ceremony
- 17 Some in an Argentine ballroom
- 19 Brit’s school exam
- 21 Doesn’t lease
- 22 Crosses (out)
- 23 Airport hire
- 25 “___ not mistaken...”
- 27 Suffer a humiliating and dramatic loss
- 32 Flowery shrubs
- 34 Neighbor of Connecticut Avenue and St. Charles Place
- 35 TV series with numerous lab scenes
- 36 Drawn-out battle over Wikipedia
- 40 Make an effort
- 41 Short life lines?
- 43 Baby shower clothes
- 45 Battle site where the U.S. secured victory in the Spanish-American War
- 49 Model born Melissa Miller
- 50 Pizza sauce spice
- 54 Bearded zoo member
- 57 Feudal estate
- 59 Van Holten’s rival
- 60 School room that might have a 3D printer or a

- laser cutter, and an alternate title for this puzzle
- Airspeed unit
- Pinnacles
- “That’s how it’s done”
- The “E” in “EMS”: Abbr.
- It might be on the tip of your tongue
- Huge expanse
- Rubber that might be burnt

Down

- 1 “Ice Age” rodent
- 2 Shortened word on a Sixers player’s uniform
- 3 Nail polish remover brand
- 4 “Barney Miller” star
- 5 Banned
- 6 The world’s largest oil producer: Abbr.
- 7 “___ 911”
- 8 Throat part
- 9 Ring grp.
- 10 Curly horned critter
- 11 King’s title
- 12 Heroine of the d’Urbervilles
- 15 National Park in Albers
- 18 Attorney Mike whose eponymous Internet law states the longer threads go, the greater the likelihood someone is called a Nazi
- 20 French school
- 24 ___ B’rith
- 26 USAF officer
- 28 Strong tropical fiber
- 29 Representative Gaetz

- 30 Cork’s spot
- 31 Artfully cheeky
- 32 Birthplace to nearly every mainstream religion
- 33 Israel, once
- 35 35-Across’s home
- 37 Branch Davidians’ home
- 38 Alternative medicine from India
- 39 Rage against the machine
- 42 Abbr. in some Montreal church names
- 44 Big name in heartburn relief
- 46 Parolee’s shout
- 47 Off
- 48 Attempt a Hail Mary, say
- 51 “Same here”
- 52 More warm
- 53 Orange colour
- 54 Pre-B-school exam
- 55 Wine Country county
- 56 Twee four stringers
- 58 They’ve got all the answers
- 61 No. after 10 nos.
- 62 Dramatic conclusion?

Last Week’s Answer

S	A	K	S		J	I	C	A	M	A		A	G	E
O	K	I	E		E	V	E	N	I	F		N	O	M
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S	W	E	A	R					S	A	Y		R	U
M	A	Y	O	R	A	L	S	E	X		A	B	B	A
E	K	E			E	X	P	I	R	E		C	O	L
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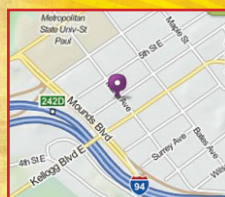


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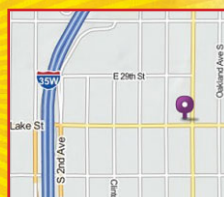
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My husband's tiny dick obsession is ruining our sex life!



Dan Savage

I've been with the same amazing man a dozen years. We've had our ups and our downs, same as any other couple, but these days life is better than it ever has been for us. Except in the bedroom.

A few years ago, he started having fantasies about sucking dick. Specifically, he wanted to suck a small one, because his is very big and he wanted to "service" a guy who's less hung than he is. Which is fine, except now that's the only thing that gets him off. We seldom have sex anymore because his obsession with sucking off a guy with a small dick makes me feel unattractive, and to be honest I don't share the fantasy. I even let him suck a dude off in front of me once and I didn't enjoy it at all. He tells me he still finds me attractive but when we're having sex the talk always goes to how he wants to take "warm and salty loads" down his throat. I've told him I'm not into it but he enjoys talking about it so much he can't help himself. I thought allowing him to live out his fantasy would help him "get over it," so to speak, but that didn't happen. So now we just don't have sex except once every few months. I'm not sure how to make him see that it's just not my thing and to get the focus back on the two of us.

LOVE OBSESSES ABOUT DICK SUCKING

If you can look at your husband and think, "Things are better than ever!" despite the dismal state of your sex life, LOADS, I hate to think what life with him used to be like.

There's not an easy fix here. If you've already told your husband the "warm and salty load" talk is a turn-off and made it clear it's the reason your sex life has pretty much collapsed and nevertheless he persists with the "warm and salty load" talk, well, then your husband is telling you would he would rather not have sex than have sex without talking about warm and salty loads.

Now I'm assuming that you actually told him how you feel, LOADS, in clear and unambiguous terms and that you said what you needed to say emphatically. And by "emphatically," LOADS, I mean, "repeatedly and at the top of your lungs." If not—if you're doing that thing women are socialized to

do, i.e. if you're downplaying the severity of your displeasure in a misguided effort to spare your husband's feelings—then you need to get emphatic. Sometimes it's not enough to tell, LOADS, sometimes you have to yell.

You're obviously GGG—you're good, giving, and game—but your husband has taken you for granted and been almost unbelievably inconsiderate. Because even if he needs to think about sucking dick to get off, he doesn't need to verbalize that fantasy each and every time you fuck. Even if you were into it, which you're not, it would get tedious. And it wasn't just selfish of him to ignore how you felt, it was short-sighted. Because women who are willing let their husbands talk about wanting to suck a dick—much less suck a dick—aren't exactly easy to come by.

I guess what I'm trying to say, LOADS, is that your husband really blew it. If he hadn't allowed this obsession to completely dominate your sex life—if he'd made some small effort to control himself—you might've been willing to let him act on his fantasy more than once. But as things stand now, it's hard to see how you come back from this. Because even if he can manage to STFU about warm and salty loads long enough to fuck you, you're going to know he's thinking about warm and salty loads. So the most plausible solution here—assuming that you want to stay married to this guy—would be for him to go suck little dicks (once circumstances allow) while you get some decent sex elsewhere (ditto).

A final thought: A lot of vanilla people think—erroneously—that acting on a kink will somehow get it out of a kinky person's system. That's not the way kinks work. Kinks are hard-wired, and kinky people wanna act on their kinks again and again for the exact same reason vanilla people wanna do vanilla things again and again: because it turns them on.

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